1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

000 The Gros Ventre system of terms of relationship has been given in a 605 former publication.[1]

601 Cousins, so far as the relationship was known, were called brothers and sisters, and they called each other's children son or daughter if the cousin [582] was of the same sex as the speaker, or nephew or niece if the cousin was of the opposite sex. Any known relationship was a bar to marriage. The [587] brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case.

583 Large amounts of property, especially horses, were given away for wives for the honor of the act, but there was no rule or definite custom covering the quantity of property so given. The horses might be given not only to the father, but to the brothers, uncles, and other relatives of the girl. Sometimes, without having received any gifts and apparently without any previous understanding, a man would give his daughter to a young man, who thereupon would give him horses, or distribute them among his wife's other relatives. Old men practised this custom in order to obtain the aid and services of a young man in caring for their horses and in other ways, and no doubt 585 sometimes also to insure a more certain food-supply. A young man on 431 marrying received a tent with all the proper furniture, usually from his prospective parents-in-law, but sometimes from his own parents, if they were the wealthier.

606 Although a young married man often lived with his father-in-law, the [591] well-known taboo custom between mother-in-law and son-in-law — which forbade their speaking, looking at each other, or being in the same tent — existed among the Gros Ventre. There was, however, no father-in-law taboo. The mother-in-law taboo extended to the son-in-law's brother.

584 If a woman did not wish a man for her lover, she might send him to do a 721 certain act of bravery. If he returned successfully from war, having accomplished the deed, he was then accepted. This custom is said to have led to the death of many young men.

428 At a person's death his property was inherited generally by his relatives. His father and mother, brothers, sisters, and children would receive part. His father and mother received the most. A man often disposed of his property before his death. If he died suddenly, as on being killed in war, his parents divided his property. It was not customary for a man on going to war to divide his property among his relatives in the contingency of his [764] death. Property particularly valued by the dead person was buried with him.

[1] Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 9, 180.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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have someone come back a real hero, and, although such a promise to torture oneself could be made in regard to other relatives, "it was usually a sister who thought so much of her brother who did that." Other forms of sacrifice which a girl might practice on her brother's behalf would be to take a fine robe, or something else of value, and stick it on top of the lodge saying: "I offer this that my brother may come back with good luck, bringing something fine from war." This could be even more specific in that a girl could offer, say, the tip of her finger, if her brother would bring back a particular thing, such as a scalp or a horse or a weapon. Again, should her brother be ill or wounded, a woman would be exceedingly concerned and might go so far, as in one case recorded, of promising that if he should recover she would join the Women's Lodge—"which was considered a great thing to do for your brother."

Usually a man would have some voice in regard to his sister's marriage and, if he were the one who made the arrangements, he received the larger share of the bride-price. It was said, too, that a brother would be especially concerned regarding his younger sister's moral conduct and might take it upon himself to keep her in line. Although parents would feel the disgrace of an erring daughter, a brother was expected to react violently. If her husband failed to punish his wife for adultery, her brother could kill her. Some instances were given, too, in which the man took his own life indirectly, by riding into the midst of the enemy without taking any precautions, because he felt so keenly the dishonor his sister who was unfaithful had imposed on him.

Maternal Uncle and Paternal Aunt

"Because a brother and a sister thought so much of each other, they were expected to be good to each other's children." If a woman had several brothers, it was the eldest who assumed the duties of the maternal uncle and his relationship with his nephews was a direct one. Should the eldest brother be unable to undertake the responsibility another brother or male cousin was expected to do so.

The maternal uncle was supposed to watch his sister's children closely even though her husband was on the scene. If he did not

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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Daylight and her sister, who were married, for a short while after their first husband died, to his classificatory brother. The other concerned an outstanding woman, Woman Chief, who was said to have been so highly valued by her husband's people that "she was kept in his family by marrying her to three brothers [successively]."

Regulations

Marriage was prohibited for those related by blood, no matter how remote the tie. If, however, a couple were in "good faith," so to speak, and it was discovered later on that they were distant kin, it was not considered necessary for them to separate on that account.[4] Affinal relatives were likewise barred as possible marriage partners, except those who were classified as in-laws of the same generation.[5] In other words, the levirate and sororate were permitted, so that any who addressed each other as brother-in-law and sister-in-law respectively were possible mates, but relatives-by-marriage in any other category were prohibited from contracting marriage. The far-reaching effects of this latter regulation can be seen from the following case. "Not so many years ago, a Gros Ventre woman was the subject of a great deal of gossip because she married late in life a man who, many years previously, had for a time been married to a widow of her maternal uncle. People didn't like it and thought she shouldn't have married that man, even though times had changed and the whites wouldn't count them as being related to each other at all."

Arrangements

As a rule, marriage arrangements were made between the husband-to-be and one or other of the bride's male kinsmen,—father, uncle or brother. Either side could take the initiative, but the bride herself was not consulted. Coming Daylight summed up the prevailing attitude in this way: "When I was young, a girl's life was not her own. When a girl was about seven she was sent away from her home to a grandmother or widowed aunt to be

[4] See also the discussion of band affiliation and exogamy, pp. 29–31.
[5] For kinship classification, see pp. 124–25.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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584 trained to do a woman's work. Then when she was ten or eleven
582 she was handed over to some man. They thought that if they gave her to her husband when she was so young she would get attached to him and make him a good wife. The Gros Ventres didn't
(587) want a woman to get in the habit of running around with different men, so a woman's folks worried if she was unmarried too long [after being divorced or widowed] because she might do something bad."

587 There is some evidence that as a woman became older, if she had occasion to remarry, she was somewhat more free to express her choice, although presumably a male relative would still be in the position of making the actual decision. It was said that
584 younger men, especially those seeking to marry "older" women,
832 "were afraid of their tongues" and felt more confident of success in possession of "love medicine." Al Chandler, for instance, was offered a love charm which he refused, but the speech of his uncle on that occasion throws some light on a situation of this kind. His uncle had told him: "Now you are a young man and you will be thinking about women. Maybe you want to get married and have picked out a woman and she doesn't want you. Maybe you are not good enough for her and, when you ask her, she will run you down plenty. Some women are swell-heads and can make a man feel cheap. It hurts a fellow to hear things like that—but that is what this charm is for. You take this and keep it in your pocket safely and do not show it to anyone or let anyone know you have it. Now if this woman hurts your feelings, go at night to where she lives and watch carefully, being sure you have the right one. Then when she goes out of the lodge to relieve herself, watch her so you can locate the exact spot. Then open this little packet and dip in it the tip of a little sliver of wood. Go over to the spot and stick the sliver right in the ground on the spot where she urinated and walk away. That is all you have to do, and in a very short time this woman will come running after you. You tell her: 'What are you doing that for? I don't want you.' She will get so anxious that she will beg you to have her."

585 Regardless of whether the man were the suitor, or whether the woman's relatives offered her in marriage, the marriage was validated through presents given by the groom. Traditionally at